



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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One in three Australians aged 15 or over not in the labour force

In September 2005, one in three (34%) Australians aged 15 years or over (an estimated 5.5 million people) were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed), according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today. The majority of these people were women (3.4 million).

Just over one-fifth (21%) of the people who were not in the labour force wanted to work, and most of these were women (68%). Of the 1.2 million people who wanted to work, only 6% (69,200 people) were actively looking for work.

There were 840,300 people who were marginally attached to the labour force (see media note). Almost all of these people (92%) were not actively looking for work but were available to start work within four weeks. For men, the main reasons for not actively looking for work were 'attending an educational institution' (34%) and 'own ill health or physical disability' (20%). For women, the main reasons were 'caring for children' (31%) and 'attending an educational institution' (18%).

Of the 840,300 people who were marginally attached to the labour force:

- two-thirds (67%) were women, and almost half of these women were aged 25-44;
- 59% intended to enter the labour force within 12 months;
- 80% had previously had a job;
- most would prefer part-time work (72% of women, 49% of men); and
- 8% were discouraged jobseekers (i.e. people who wanted work and were available to work within four weeks, but weren't actively looking for work because they believed they would not find a job) and 61% of these were women.

Further information is in **Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2005** (cat. no. 6220.0).

Media Notes: People not in the labour force are defined as **marginally attached** to the labour force if they want to work, and are either not actively looking for work but are available to start work within four weeks, or are actively looking for work but are not available to start in the survey reference week. The scope of this survey has been expanded to include all people aged 15 years and over, having previously been restricted to people aged 15-69 years. Comparisons with the previous survey are therefore not immediately valid.

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